

OMAHA METROPOLITAN MEDICAL RESPONSE SYSTEM AND CHAIRMAN RECOGNIZED FOR LEADERSHIP

The recipient of the 2005 "*Making It Happen*" United Way award is the Omaha Metropolitan Medical Response System (OMMRS). OMMRS was created in 1997. Since its inception more than 55 agencies and 150 volunteers from the private and public sector throughout Douglas, Sarpy, Mills and Pottawattamie County metroplex have worked in an exhaustive, collaborative effort. All of these volunteers have paid jobs which are very demanding, yet they have demonstrated an incredible resolve by working together to create a comprehensive and integrated medical response system.

OMMRS was one of the first MMRS programs in the nation and is considered to be a national model. Some of its programs and personnel have been featured in publications, such as the *Washington Post* and *Newsweek*, as well as having caught the attention of members of Congress and the Center for Disease Control.

OMMRS' mission is to prepare the local medical community, in partnership with public health, fire, law enforcement, businesses, government entities and community organizations of the Omaha metropolitan area for an integrated medical response to disaster, including those that could result from a terrorist attack

Among the major accomplishments of OMMRS are;

- All area hospitals now have the capability to decontaminate patients who have been exposed to biological or chemical agents.
- Created a medical Response Coordinator position to coordinate all request s for medical supplies, personnel and pharmaceuticals for all hospitals and medical facilities.
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- Place Mark-I kits on all rescue squads in Omaha and in all area hospitals, so there is enough nerve agent antidotes available.
- The Media Committee has a plan for central briefing sites through out the metro area, to accommodate large national media organizations
- Update and enhanced the communication capabilities between area hospitals
- Established a Personnel Processing Point Committee to assists with identifying, screening and placing volunteers and other professional services

The citizens of metropolitan Omaha can be assured that in time of disaster their medical, health and social needs will be met in a timely and efficient manner.

The 2005 Disaster Preparedness Award was presented to Phyllis Dutton, OMMRS Coordinator and Chair of the OMMRS, for her leadership and commitment to OMMRS which is very evident from the following nomination that

was submitted.

September 11, 2001 was a wake up call for Americans and the citizens of Douglas County. However, in the Metropolitan Omaha Area's preparation for this type of event had begun long before the twin towers collapsed. The Omaha Metropolitan Medical Response System (OMMRS) was created in 1997. Since its inception OMMRS' many volunteers have worked to create a comprehensive and integrated medical response system throughout the metropolitan area.

Ms. Dutton has been at the head of this group since its inception serving as the co-chair of the Steering Committee and then as chair since 2004. Under her leadership OMMRS has grown to include representation from over 155 different governmental, public and private agencies in eight area counties. She presides over 18 different subcommittees, which represent the depth and breath this group has brought together to improve community disaster preparedness.

Her enthusiasm and zeal have strengthened groups. Although she is retired, her passion drives her to work beyond the usual work week hours to unify partnerships and solidify relationships among many diverse groups and disciplines to ensure the healthcare community is better prepared to respond.

Because of her attention to details, progressive thinking, and planning efforts, OMMRS has been recognized nationally in publication such as the *Washington Post*, *Newsweek* and several governmental publications.